

Although Carmen may no longer be with us, I pray that her friends and family have found some sense of solace knowing that she was not alone at the end of her life's journey but was surrounded by loved ones who sought to comfort her with their presence and their prayers. I would like to share the family's appreciation for the U.S. Navy officials who helped everyone through the difficult issues that arose from Carmen's end-of-life care. She had devoted herself to service and looked forward to a promising career in the Navy, and in her final moments they did everything they could to ensure she was treated with the honor and respect she deserved.

Of particular assistance and comfort to the family were Carmen's commanding officer, LCDR Tim Sullivan, as well as Senior Chief Joseph Adamo, LT Tim Johnson, CAPT Charles King, and ADM Annette Brown. Their compassion and understanding made a tragic situation a little more bearable.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and family of Carmen McCormick, particularly her parents, Michael Flanigan and Leslie Santa Maria. Although her time with us was far too short, her spirit and her love will remain in our hearts forever.●

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

● Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I today recognize the extraordinary contributions of the San Luis Valley, in my home State of Colorado, to our national heritage and to the history of the West.

As a native son of the San Luis Valley, I know how hard the peoples of the region have fought to protect their traditions, their language, their art and architecture, and the stories of their ancestors. They have fought to protect treasured ranchlands, sand dunes, waterways, and mountain peaks. And they have fought to protect a rural way of life that cherishes family, faith, and hard work.

To support the stewardship efforts of the valley's peoples, and to ensure that the national treasures of the region are preserved for generations to come, I have introduced legislation to create the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area in the San Luis Valley.

This legislation will direct the National Park Service to assist citizens, organizations, and local governments in Alamosa, Costilla, and Conejos Counties in developing a management plan to guide the continued stewardship of the region's cultural and natural resources. Though this bill provides local communities assistance from the Federal Government, I am proud that the National Heritage Area Program rewards a consensual, locally driven approach to management rather than a top-down, federally dominated approach.

This bill provides economic assistance to a region that has paid an eco-

nomic price for preserving its rural way of life. The towns of San Luis and Antonito, among the oldest settlements in Colorado, have successfully preserved their moradas, placitas, historic churches, religious celebrations, and historic festivals, yet the counties they are in, Conejos and Costilla, are two of the four poorest in America. This bill helps these communities leverage their cultural capital to spur economic development by providing up to \$10 million to rebuild historic structures, develop interpretive exhibits, and attract tourism.

The cultural and historic value of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is immeasurable. Since people first settled in the San Luis Valley over 11,000 years ago, the region has been home to Ute, Navajo, Tiwa, Tewa, Kiowa, Hispano, and Anglo peoples, among others. The cultures, lifestyles, and cosmologies of the valley's settlers have converged, conflicted, and coalesced through the centuries, and have left an unmistakable imprint on the peoples who inhabit the Valley today. The region was dubbed "The Land of the Blue Sky People" in honor of the Utes, the oldest continuous residents of what is now Colorado, and is the home of Mount Blanca or Sisnaajini, the sacred mountain that, according to folklore, marks the eastern boundary of the Navajo world. Seventeenth century Spanish, still spoken by about 35 percent of the population of the Sangre de Cristo region, testifies to the strong influence of Hispano settlers, while the narrow gauge rails of the Rio Grande Railroad recall America's era of westward expansion.

In addition to its remarkable historical landmarks and cultural treasures, the San Luis Valley's natural wonders attract visitors from around the world. The valley is home to 3 National Wildlife Refuges, 15 State Wildlife Refuges, a National Forest, 2 National Forest Wilderness Areas, and the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. These public lands, and thousands of acres of private lands in between, are home to a rich array of plants and animals, from the pika of the alpine tundra to the pronghorn of the prairie and the sandhill cranes among the dunes.

This legislation will help protect these crown jewels of the American landscape by supporting a local, consensus-based approach to land management. Because the best management policies come through cooperation, not coercion, this bill maintains strong protections for private property owners. The Federal funds in this bill cannot be used to purchase private property and the management plan cannot restrict the rights of property owners on their own lands.

For generations the peoples of the San Luis Valley have worked hard to be good stewards of their land and water. They have worked hard to preserve their culture and a rural way of life. And they have worked hard to create this National Heritage Area.

They are looking for our help now to protect a place so central to Colorado peoples, so emblematic of the Western landscape, and so much at the core of the American experience.

Let us honor the contributions of the San Luis Valley to our Nation's heritage by designating the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area.●

U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL SERVING IN IRAQ

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, today is a historic day for the people of Iraq as they go to the polls to freely elect a permanent 275-member Iraqi National Assembly. It is important to remember that these elections in Iraq would not have been possible without the bravery and sacrifice of the U.S. Armed Forces who have served and are currently serving in Iraq helping to provide the Iraqi people with the freedom and democracy that they deserve.

Our service members who are serving in Iraq are promoting democracy, restoring and repairing public services, working to prevent terror attack, and destroying the insurgency in a country that hasn't known freedom in decades.

As we focus on the meaning of Thursday's election in Iraq, it is important to realize the extraordinary bravery exhibited by our service members.

One unit in particular, the 4th Civil Affairs Group, CAG, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, based in Washington, DC was deployed to Iraq during the January 30, 2005 elections of a temporary Iraqi National Assembly. These marines, many of whom are from my State of Pennsylvania, helped to promote democracy, restore and repair public services to the Iraqi people, and prevent terror attacks by insurgents. This particular unit played an active role in the election day operations in January by setting up polling locations and participating in security patrols to protect voters and voting sites and was an integral part in the United States' battle for Fallujah. Also during its deployment, the 4th CAG worked to install new electricity transformers in the Iraqi city of Ramadi, the capital city of the al Anbar Province, also known as one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq. And I would be remiss if I failed to mention that the deputy commander of this unit of brave marines was William Reynolds, now proudly serving as Senator Specter's chief of staff.

One marine in particular from that unit, CPL William Cahir, has written about his experiences in Iraq. Corporal Cahir, originally from State College PA, was a journalist before September 11, 2001. After seeing the horrific terrorist attacks that occurred in our country on that day, Bill Cahir felt compelled to serve our country and joined the Marine Corps. As part of the 4th CAG of the Marine Corps Reserve, Corporal Cahir was deployed to Iraq.

During his deployment to Iraq, Corporal Cahir, along with other members of the 4th CAG, helped to establish a

Civil Military Operations Center in Ramadi. On election day in January in Iraq, Corporal Cahir and the 4th CAG were responsible for protecting a polling site in Ramadi.

Having returned from his deployment to Iraq, Corporal Cahir has since returned to his civilian job. As a journalist, Bill Cahir covers a multitude of stories but has since focused many of those stories on his own personal experiences in Iraq and the experiences of other service members.

In one article he wrote for *The Express-Times*, a newspaper from Easton, PA, Mr. Cahir told the story of two service members—COL James T. Anthony, a marine reservist from Nazareth, PA, and LTC Stanley B. Smith, Jr., an Army officer with the Army's 98th Division, Institutional Training. Both service members were on their way to Camp Taji in Baghdad to begin their deployments to Iraq.

In his article, Bill Cahir documented the sentiments of these two service members during their deployments. Colonel Anthony had recounted his observations of the training of Iraqi soldiers, "U.S. Marines, soldiers and sailors, along with their commanders, 'did a fantastic job really pushing the ball forward when it comes to training Iraqi security forces, not just in terms of numbers but in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.'"

Lieutenant Colonel Smith also recounted his experiences in Iraq when he said, "I am able to feel a sense of pride in accomplishment here in seeing real results in the form of construction that has been completed as planned and Iraqi units operating with installations that contribute to mission readiness."

Mr. President, these stories from our soldiers are just a few more examples of the success in Iraq that our troops are contributing to. Each and every one of our service members has contributed to the promotion of democracy, the security, and the rebuilding of Iraq.

I applaud the marines of the 4th Civil Affairs Group and all of the service members who are serving or who have served our Nation in Iraq. The bravery that they have displayed and the progress they have made in Iraq is remarkable, and it needs to be told.●

AIMEE'S LAW

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act, includes "technical changes" to legislation known as "Aimee's Law." I am dismayed that the Department of Justice has waited until now to take the adequate steps to implement this legislation. I sponsored this legislation in the Senate, which was signed into law by President Clinton in October 2000. The law was to be implemented in 2002. I believe that 3 years is more than adequate time to implement this critical protection for my constituents.

Aimee's Law is named after Aimee Willard, a college senior from suburban Philadelphia who was brutally raped and murdered by a convicted murderer who was released early in Nevada and crossed State lines to kill again in Pennsylvania. Aimee's mother, Gail, became a tireless advocate to prevent such unnecessary tragedies from happening to other families, culminating in the passage of Aimee's Law in the U.S. Senate by an 81-to-17 margin and its final inclusion in H.R. 3244, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act conference report, which also included the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization, Pub. L. 106-386. Aimee's Law is narrowly tailored to address the heinous crimes of murder, rape, and child molestation.

The law is designed to protect the residents of one State from the negligence of another State. The law assists States which recognize that the primary responsibility of State and local governments is to maintain public safety. Sexual predators have the highest rate of recidivism of any category of violent crime. The law simply provides that States where a subsequent similar violent crime occurs because of an early release will be reimbursed for the prosecution and incarceration costs through a reduction of future Federal funds from the allocation of the State where the original violent crime and conviction occurred.

I wish to state for the record that I will not object to the "technical changes" of Aimee's Law in H.R. 3402 as the Department of Justice assures me that the law will be implemented within six months. While I think that it is unacceptable that it has taken this long to take the appropriate steps to implement this law, I am hopeful that Aimee's Law will finally and effectively be implemented in the very near future so other families do not suffer the same fate as the Williards.●

TRIBUTE TO DICK FORD

● Mr. TALENT. Mr. Present, today I rise to honor the accomplishments of Dick Ford, one of the most respected broadcast journalists in the St. Louis area. After more than 50 years of media service around the country, Mr. Ford will be retiring today, December 15, 2005. He will be greatly missed by viewers in the St. Louis area and in the field of journalism as a whole.

After receiving a bachelor of science degree in political science from the University of Pittsburgh and serving on active duty aboard an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean, Dick began his professional career in 1951 and went on to work in a number of States as a reporter, news director, and anchor.

After having established himself as a prominent journalist, Mr. Ford came to the St. Louis area where he began working at KSDK-TV. In July 1992, he joined KTVI Fox 2, from which he will retire.

In his distinguished career, Mr. Ford has been honored with the prestigious

Emmy Award, among other recognitions of his journalistic talent and integrity.

The many hallmarks of his career include a training mission in an F-4 Phantom jet, live reports from Rome when Sister Philippine Duchesne was canonized, reports on a nuclear submarine and from the flight deck of an aircraft carrier and travels to Saudi Arabia to report on Desert Storm.

In addition to his passion for journalism, Dick Ford is a committed father and husband. He is also passionate about the community of St. Louis. Mr. Ford currently works with the USO and the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, among other St. Louis area organizations.

In his work, both as a journalist and a community leader, Dick has won the respect of his colleagues and viewers alike. I have appreciated very much Dick's dedication and professionalism. He sought more than just the story—he wanted to get the story right. In his interviews with me, he never hesitated to ask the tough questions, but he was always fair about it.

Dick, congratulations on your many contributions to the great State of Missouri and your tremendously successful career.●

TRIBUTE TO TERRY R. LITTLE

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to recognize the service of an outstanding leader and public servant. After more than 38 years of combined military and civil service, Mr. Terry R. Little will soon retire from the Department of Defense, DOD, and move into private life.

Mr. Little is one of the most seasoned weapons acquisition program managers in the DOD. He has over 24 years of program management leadership in seven major weapon acquisition programs including two highly classified missile programs, the AIM-9X Short Range Air-to-Air Missile, the Joint Direct Attack Munition, the Small Diameter Bomb, the Joint Air-to-Surface Stand-off Missile, and the Kinetic Energy Interceptor Program. Each of these weapon systems has delivered, or promises to provide, unparalleled advancements in capability at affordable costs for the defense of our Nation. His creative ingenuity, tenacious organizational drive, and superior personal leadership directly enabled these advancements.

Mr. Little is currently the Executive Director of the Missile Defense Agency, MDA. In this capacity, he is responsible for acquisition, personnel, and administrative policy. His intellectual commitment for excellence and genuine concern for people have aided immeasurably to the day-to-day operation of the Agency. His professional achievements are numerous, impressive, and reflect his dedication and commitment for achieving the highest standards of professionalism and integrity in the service of the United States.